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Annex "A," Subparagraph 1e,
Sociological Background

LANGUAGE IN FORMOSA

Major Languages and Dialects

• 19 In Formosa there are several language groups, each with its own language or dialect. Most important of the languages and dialects are: the Min-nan dialect (or Amoy dialect), the Kuo-yü (commonly referred to as Mandarin), Japanese, the Hakka dialect, and the languages of the aborigines. To a minor extent, the dialects of Shanghai and Canton are used.

Considering the educational and historical background of the population, a very rough approximation of the number of speakers of each language and dialect may be ventured:

Language or Dialect	Approximate Number of Speakers
Min-nan dialect	7,000,000
Mandarin	4,000,000
Japanese	4,000,000
Hakka dialect	1,500,000
Aboriginal languages	200,000

Language varies, first, according to ethnic groups, and second, according to the length of time the ethnic groups have been on the island. The population of Formosa can be divided into two distinct ethnic groups, namely the Chinese

and the aborigines. The latter's language consists of seven different dialects which belong to the Malay-Polynesian family.[1] They are the dialects of Taiyal, Saiset, Bunun, Tsou, Paiwan, Ami, and Yami. These dialects have no written script.

The Chinese fall into three language groups: Mainland Chinese, Formosan Chinese of Fukien descent, and those of Kwangtung ancestry -- Hakkas. The Chinese who come from Mainland China speak Mandarin[2] as a rule, although a variety of dialects representing Shanghai, Canton, Foochow, etc., are spoken by a good number of them. While not proportionate in degree, it may not be an exaggeration to say that all dialects of northern, central, and coastal China are represented in Formosa.

The Formosan Chinese, except some of Kwangtung descent, speak Min-nan (閩南) as typified by Amoy (廈門) and Swatow (汕頭) dialects. Most of the Hakkas -- a minority mainly of Kwangtung descent -- can understand and speak the Min-nan dialect, although they have an entirely different Hakka dialect of their own.

Japanese is spoken by those who inhabited the island prior to the end of World War II. Most of the adult Formosan Chinese and adult

1. Cf. Tung-ho Tung, Languages of China, Taipei, 1953, China Culture Foundation, p. 14: "Malay-Polynesian Family consists of languages spoken in the Malay Peninsula, in some parts of Indo-China, and in the Pacific Islands."

2. It covers southern and northern Mandarin as spoken in central and northern China.

19 aborigines, as a result of fifty years of Japanese rule, are at least able to understand Japanese. Japanese was taught in schools as the official language, and a knowledge of the Japanese language continues to be general all over the island.

Geographical Distribution

Among the Formosan Chinese and the aborigines, distribution of languages is determined by geographical location of ethnic groups. The accompanying figure shows that the Min-nan dialect is widely spread over the southern plains and northern section of the island while the Hakka dialect is dominant in the eastern trench and hsien [counties] of Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli. The lines of geographical demarcation should not be construed to imply that over these lines one dialect is not understood by those who speak the other. The actual situation, with few exceptions, is quite the contrary. Many of the Hakkas, because of occupational similarities, migration, and communication with the Fukinese, speak the Min-nan dialect with native fluency. However, in some remote Hakka villages in the eastern trench, a traveler not equipped with a knowledge of the Hakka dialect may find it necessary to communicate in sign language.

The aboriginal dialects are distributed in the central and eastern mountains. Their dialects are numerous and complex, as is exemplified by the fact that when members of the same tribe are separated geographically several sub-dialects will be spoken. Mountain tribesmen often find themselve

19 total strangers as far as a common speech is concerned.[3] The Taiyal and Paiwan tribes, which cover large areas, are good examples of this phenomenon.

Since the Chinese Mainlanders are dwelling chiefly in urban areas, the distribution of Mandarin follows closely the boundaries of their settlement. However, it must be noted that Formosan Chinese who speak Mandarin are increasing gradually over the entire island.

The Written Languages and Their Problems

212 Mandarin is the official language on the island and is used in administration, jurisdiction, education, and, to a large extent, in commerce. Its written form and that of the Min-nan and Hakka dialects are practically the same because all three belong to the Chinese Language Family. Their characteristic features as well as their problems are similar to those on the China Mainland.

Romanized Min-nan dialect has been used by some missionaries and some Formosan-Chinese Christians. For instance, a Bible has been written in Roman alphabet with diacritical marks indicating the tonal features of the Min-nan dialect. During the Japanese rule an attempt was made by some Formosan intellectuals to popularize the romanization of the dialect. They claimed it would help abolish illiteracy, because those who could not read anything written in Chinese could read its equivalent in Min-nan dialect if they would master the alphabet together with the tonal

3. Sainosuke, Fujisaki, Taiwan no banzoku [Savage Tribes of Taiwan], Tokyo, 1936, Kokushi kankokai, pp. 6~7.

212 marks. The Japanese did not encourage the movement, for they were attempting to assimilate the Formosans. The present status of the romanized Min-nan dialect has not changed, probably because it is looked upon as an obstacle to the spreading of Mandarin.

Knowledge of Foreign Languages

• 19 The Japanese language is not considered a foreign language here, for it has been adopted by nearly half of the population.

The number of people who can speak English is limited to those who have studied or lived in English-speaking countries, to local students who have limited ability to speak or to understand, and to those who come in contact most often with foreigners on the island. About one per cent of the population has ability to communicate in the English language while another four per cent has knowledge of elementary English.

No classic in the Russian language are given in the National Taiwan University -- the highest institution of learning in Formosa. Thus, it may be said that a knowledge of the Russian language is negligible.

Role of the National Language and Future Trend

The fact that Mandarin has been designated as the national language should not obscure the prevalence of the Min-nan dialect, which has

19 served for centuries as the social language of Formosa. Nearly all of the Formosan Chinese consider this dialect as their mother-tongue and speak it in their daily life. Among the people not previously educated in Japanese or Mandarin, the Min-nan dialect is the only means of oral communication. Most adults who received a Japanese education find Japanese more convenient in writing and in conversation. Likewise, the Formosan Chinese youth now attending schools find Mandarin most convenient for reading and writing. It is this last point that suggests the future significance of Mandarin.

The government is making an all-out effort to infuse non-Mandarin-speaking people on the island with knowledge of the national language. Social education, the establishment of supplementary classes throughout the primary school systems, and lessons by radio are some of the means employed. School children are quickly adopting the new language, and it is believed that in the future Mandarin will become the most important language in Formosa.

In the years to come, as the present generation grows older, Mandarin will gradually replace the local dialects as well as Japanese. It seems possible to say that in fifty years, assuming continuation of the present conditions, the native dialects and Japanese will have no linguistic importance in Formosa.